

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

SPECIAL SANITARY INSPECTORS.

The following instructions have been prepared for your information, and assistance in the performance of your duties as Sanitary Inspectors.

You are requested to give them an attentive reading, and to carry them with you, in your house to house visits, as you may frequently have occasion to refer to them, in answer to the many inquiries you will have to meet in explanation of the nature of your call. This explanation is to be made cheerfully, and if at any time your authority is required, you will, without hesitation, present your certificate of appointment.

If at any time you are at a loss for instructions not contained herein, you will immediately apply to the Chairman of the Committee on your district, who will always be ready to aid and assist you in the discharge of your duties.

When asking permission to enter a house and examine the premises, you are to employ no authoritative language; and be careful to observe the utmost decorum and politeness toward all persons with whom you have intercourse, remembering, that the duties you have to perform, depend entirely upon the sufferance of the people.

Should you be refused admission, you are not to force an entrance, but explain the object and the importance of your visit, and if they still resist your application, especially if you suspect the existence of a nuisance, you will note

Object of instructions.

For advice apply to Chairman of the Committee.

Department on entering houses.

If refused entrance report to Board.

the number and location of the house, and report the same to the Committee, when the Board will take charge of the case and instruct the health officer, as provided for in Section 27, Health Law of 1818.

Discretion
in making
examina-
tions.

Great discretion will have to be exercised by you in making your examinations. You will understand that, while your instructions require you to examine every house, you are not expected to enter the parlor, chambers, sitting-rooms or kitchens of the better class of houses; this would be a work of supererogation, as your good judgment will dictate. There are, however, houses that will require a thorough examination of every room, as, for instance, many of the lower-class boarding houses, taverns, oyster houses, restaurants, and numerous residences, where the external appearance of the premises would indicate the necessity for a complete overhauling from cellar to garret, and also the houses of the lower classes located in many of the smaller streets, alleys and courts. But remember, that the cellar, privy and water closet of every house, without an exception, demand an investigation at your hands, because nuisances may lurk, or be concealed in either of these places, without the knowledge of the family.

Examina-
tions with-
out excep-
tions.

Full, foul
and leaky
privies.

Full privies—that is, where the contents are less than three feet from the floor or surface of the ground—or foul privies, that have an intolerable mephitic smell, or leaky privies, running into a cellar or adjoining room or yard, or open privies, without houses over them, or privies without wells or hogsheads under them, are to be reported as nuisances.

Water in
cellars.

Water in cellars, or stagnant water anywhere in the vicinity of residences, occasioned by defective drainage or from other causes, constitute nuisances.

Filthy cel-
lars, yards,
&c.

Filthy cellars, rooms, outhouses, yards and alleys of houses, either from the want of cleaning or the deposit of refuse matter of any and every description, are nuisances.

Stables,
rags and
bones, bone

Hog-pens, filthy cow and horse stables, or goat-pens, or filthy manure heaps, or collections of rubbish in dark,

filthy and damp places, from whence arises stinking odors, and horse boiling, or collections of bones or rags, in shops, cellars or yards or bone-boiling or horse-boiling establishments, unless they are in rural districts, are nuisances prejudicial to public health, and should be reported.

Rural districts are those outer sections of the city unbuilt on, and not only assessed but occupied as farm lands. Nor is it necessary to extend your visits or examinations to the residences of this portion of our population, unless directed in some special case by the Board, or from information otherwise received of an existing nuisance. Rural districts.
How to act.

No hog-pens are allowed in the built-up sections of the city, and wherever they are found a special notice should be given to the health officer, who will immediately take measures to carry out the orders of the Board. Hog-pens.

Slaughter-houses and butcher's yards should be carefully inspected, and their manure pits receive a particular examination. It should be also ascertained whether the arrangements of these establishments are in strict conformity with the law governing slaughter-houses.* Slaughter-houses and yards.

Factories of every description must not be overlooked; their workshops, cellars, yards and rooms for the storing of goods, are often the receptacles for manufactured articles or for the offal from materials used in the business, injurious to public health, or are without ventilation, are crowded with inmates, and are both filthy and damp. Do not hesitate to report all such instances without any reservation. Factories workshops, &c.

* All slaughter-houses located within the city, except those in the rural portions thereof, not having paved and graded floors, and a direct communication with sewers or wells for the purpose of carrying off the fluid offal, or unprovided with hydrant or pump water within the yard, or with paved and graded yards, or where the refuse of slaughtered animals is allowed to remain and accumulate, are hereby declared to be nuisances prejudicial to public health; and the owners, agents, or occupants shall be required to remove such nuisance within ten days from the date of notice. Should this not be done, the Health Officer is hereby directed to effect the removal at the expense of the owner, and to prosecute the parties for the penalty of maintaining a nuisance.

Burial
grounds.

In several of the closely built up districts, will be found burial grounds; some of them very ancient and crowded with the remains of the dead, others of more recent origin, but equally crowded, and but little care observed in depositing bodies to a sufficient depth (five feet) below the surface. You are expected to keep a vigilant eye upon these depositories of the dead, and report any violations of the health laws and any nuisances thereby created.

Attention to
dwellings of
poor.

In your house-to-house visitations you must give special attention to the character of the dwellings occupied by the poorer classes of society, and those tenements inhabited by the wretched and degraded of our population.

Crowded
and dilapi-
dated tene-
ments.

Many of these are over-crowded with inmates, dilapidated and unfit for occupation, deficient in ventilation or light, without yards, without privies, and peradventure you may discover a whole court of houses deficient for water convenience, and swarming with a mixed population both filthy and disgusting to look upon. Be sure to mark these "plague spots," and bring them to the notice of the Board. They demand your earnest and closest attention.

Cellar, or
under-
ground tene-
ments.

Nor are you to lose sight of underground or cellar tenements. They have already been declared nuisances prejudicial to health. The Board have given these haunts of poverty and disease a special heading in your register, and they shall expect you to give them a special investigation—reporting carefully all you may meet with, and in your report furnishing the number of inmates in each one.

Open lots
and water
lots.

Open lots and water lots to be found throughout the city, will also receive your strict attention. The former are frequently made the receptacle for house rubbish, kitchen garbage, dead animals, and offal of every description, and hence become a nuisance prejudicial to public health. The latter contain stagnant water, a deposit for refuse matter, their muddy edges loaded with vermin and sending forth noxious gases, which contaminate the atmosphere and become fruitful sources of disease. Report every case to the Board.

Besides the nuisances already alluded to, there are others of a more public nature, equally deserving of a strict personal inspection.

These are the streets, gutters, sewers, docks, and markets. They are mostly the property of the city. Ample provision has been made by Councils to provide for their cleanliness, and there is no other reason why they are allowed to become nuisances, than the culpable negligence of those whose business it is to keep them clean. Public nuisances and provision for cleaning.

You will, therefore, watch the thoroughfares of your district, and you are hereby charged to report faithfully every instance of neglect on the part of the supervisors or contractors. Wherever you discover an accumulation of street dirt, either standing in heaps or ungathered, or piles of foetid filth at the end of alleys or courts, or elsewhere—the decomposing garbage of kitchens and the dirt of yards, &c.,—or wherever you find the gutters obstructed and loaded with disgusting refuse, or wherever you detect defective drainage from imperfect paving or grading, either in street or gutter, do not hesitate to report them as nuisances of the worst kind. Report negligence of officials.

The sewers, especially the inlets, at the corners of the streets and their outlets fronting on the rivers, are liable to become serious nuisances, and you must frequently give them a careful investigation. Public sewers.

The sumps or traps to the sewers are liable to fill up with filthy refuse matter from the streets and gutters, causing obstruction to the flow of water and sending forth into the atmosphere an offensive effluvia; this of itself constitutes a nuisance, while the removal of the contents of these inlets, which is required, but practised less frequently than is necessary, and these contents, reeking with the most disgusting odor, gathered into a heap and allowed to remain for hours and even days, in the street, causes a far greater nuisance and should enlist your prompt attention. The sewers at the inlets and man-holes, and at their outlets on the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, often discharging Examine inlets and outfalls or mouths of sewers.

noxious and sickly exhalations, are equally a nuisance, and require disinfection or deodorization. You must report them wherever you discover they are emitting foul air.

Docks along
city fronts.

The docks along the city fronts on the rivers, especially the Delaware, have ever been looked upon as causes for the encouragement of epidemic diseases, and require your watchful supervision. They are liable to fill up, chiefly from the contents of sewers belched forth through their mouths, also from the dirty street gutters that empty themselves directly into the docks at the foot of each street running to the river—and when thus loaded with filth become serious nuisances and require dredging. Do not fail to examine them and report them to the Board.

Filth on
wharves.

On many of the wharves along the city front you will find nuisances, sometimes from collections of mud, or refuse from store houses, or from the remains of perishable articles from on shipboard: these require your watchful care and must be reported.

Deposits of
street dirt.

But a still greater nuisance will be found on some of the wharves arising from large deposits of street dirt. These deposits are abominably disgusting and demand an early removal. Be sure to call the attention of the Board to these collections of street dirt, whether on the wharves or on vacant lots in other parts of the city.

Market
houses ex-
amined.

The market-houses scattered over our City will need your vigilant watch and care. They are the daily resort of the public who visit them in crowds, hence the necessity for close observation. Refuse animal and vegetable matters are often left standing on the pavements, or under the stalls, or find their way into the adjacent gutters and streets, making a grievous nuisance.

Putrid
meats.

Besides, you will sometimes detect a putrid smell which arises from decomposing meats closely confined under the stalls, or in the butchers' pits under the pavement. Be particular to notify the Board of every nuisance of this description.

Another nuisance will occasionally be readily detected in passing over the vaults, or near the grating of oyster cellars, or by the doors of oyster houses. Do not neglect to give all such places your careful examination. The nuisance referred to arises generally from the shells too long retained about the premises, while fragments of meat adhering thereto are undergoing rapid putrefaction. Be ever ready to make them the subject for information to the Board.

Oyster cellars and vaults.

In conclusion, you will be expected to give the ordinary business hours to your work.

Hours for work.

You will make daily returns to the Health Office on the blank sheets—with which you will be provided—of the nuisances examined, and these returns are to be an exact copy from your register.

Reports how made.

You will be required also to fill up your own notices, making duplicate copies of the same, as often as the number and character of the nuisances you return may require it, after they shall have been acted upon by the Board.

To fill notices.

These notices you will serve on the persons directed to remove nuisances, keeping an exact copy, and at the expiration of the allotted time for that purpose, make a second visit and report to the Board whether the same has been complied with or not, endorsing on the back of the notice the words "complied with," or "not complied with."

Directions to serve notices.

In delivering a notice, if the owner, agent, or occupant of the property on which the nuisance exists cannot be found, the notice may be left on the premises, in as safe a place as practicable.

How, when owners are not found.

When water on a lot is found to be a nuisance, or a lot requiring to be filled, shall be reported to the Board, you are required to state, what in your opinion will be the expense of removing said nuisances by filling up, or by digging wells to drain the water.

To state expense for removing nuisances.

With these few suggestions, in explanation of the duties of your calling as sanitary inspectors, we have every reason to believe that you will both understand and appreciate the

Concluding remarks.

importance of the work, and apply yourselves to its faithful discharge.

It is alone in the prompt and strict performance of the business entrusted you, of house to house visitation, and an impartial and faithful return of existing nuisances prejudicial to health, whether public or private, that we rely for placing the City in a sanitary position, most favorable to resist the epidemic Cholera, should it make its appearance in our midst.

WILSON JEWELL,

Chairman of Sanitary Committee.

By order of the Board of Health.

November 14th, 1865.